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state, Big Sky, Basketball

GRIZ HOOPSTERS HOST
MSU IN KEY BSC CONTEST
guffey/jg

MISSOULA--

- GAME:** It's a do-or-die situation for the University of Montana basketball team this Saturday, February 24th, when they host the Bobcats of Montana State in a crucial Big Sky Conference game. Tipoff is 8 p.m.
- PRELIM GAME:** The UM Cubs will play the MSU junior varsity at 5:50 p.m. in the preliminary contest.
- RADIO:** Bill Schwanke of KYLT-AM Radio will call the play-by-play, with air-time scheduled 15 minutes prior to tipoff of the varsity game.
- TV GAME:** KECI-TV of Missoula will do a live, statewide broadcast of the key BSC and interstate rivalry. The pregame show begins at 7:30 p.m.
- COACHES:** Both UM's Mike Montgomery and MSU's Bruce Haroldson are in their initial seasons at their respective schools; however, Montgomery has worked in the BSC five seasons (at UM and Boise State) prior to this year.
- SERIES RECORD:** In 206 meetings (since the 1905-1906 season) the Grizzlies have won 88 times, while MSU has won 117. UM has won 11 of the last 13 meetings; however, MSU defeated the Grizzlies in a meeting earlier this season in Bozeman.
- LAST MEETING:** On January 27th of this year MSU took a hard-fought, 57-50 victory over the Grizzlies, as 9,521 vocal fans looked on in the MSU Field House.
- Frontliners Craig Henkel, Allan Nielsen and John Stroeder all scored 10 points each in the game. Stroeder had a team-high 8 rebounds. MSU was led by 6-8 senior center Rod Smith, who scored 17 points and grabbed 9 rebounds.
- Both teams had 32 rebounds in the game. An important statistic was the free throw shooting in the second half. UM made one of two, compared to 8 of 10 for MSU. MSU led 27-25 at halftime.
- FINAL HOME GAME:** This will be the last time Grizzly fans get to see Nielsen, Henkel and Charlie Yankus in action. All three are seniors.
- SENIOR STATS:** Nielsen needs only six points Saturday to pass Robert Sparks (1949-52) as UM's No. 16 all-time scorer. Nielsen has 742 points. Henkel has scored 560 in his career and Yankus has 380.

-more-

BSC STATS:

Craig Finberg, MSU's playmaking senior guard, is second in the conference in scoring at 17.8, and second in assists (5.8). Finberg was a first-team all-BSC pick last season, and was named the Player of the Week for his 47-point production against Idaho State and Boise State last week.

Stroeder and Nielsen are 12th and 13th in scoring, averaging 13.8 and 13.7 points a game, respectively.

Stroeder is 4th in rebounding at 7.8, while MSU's Smith is 6th (7.1).

MSU is second in scoring offense (75.2), while the Griz are 1st in scoring defense at 59.1, and should remain in the top five nationally.

PROBABLE STARTERS:

MONTANA

G -- Blaine Taylor, 6-1, So. (6.0 ppg., 3.1 apg.)
 G -- Craig Zanon, 6-6, So. (6.9 ppg., 2.8 rpg., 1.0 apg.)
 C -- John Stroeder, 6-10, Jr. (13.8 ppg., 7.8 rpg., 1.8 apg.)
 F -- Allan Nielsen, 6-6, Sr. (13.7 ppg., 5.7 rpg., 2.8 apg.)
 F -- Craig Henkel, 6-7, Sr. (8.5 ppg., 4.2 rpg., 1.4 apg.)
 6 -- Tim McCauley, 6-1, Jr. (4.8 ppg., 1.9 apg.)
 6 -- Rod Brandon, 6-6, So. (4.0 ppg., 2.5 rpg.)
 6 -- Charlie Yankus, 6-6, Sr. (4.2 ppg., 3.1 rpg.)

MONTANA STATE

G -- Craig Finberg, 6-1, Sr. (17.8 ppg., 5.8 apg.)
 G -- Mick Durham, 5-10, Jr. (10.1 ppg., 4.7 apg.)
 C -- Rod Smith, 6-8, Sr. (11.5 ppg., 6.8 rpg.)
 F -- Arnold McDowell, 6-4, Jr. (14.5 ppg., 6.5 rpg.)
 F -- Doug Hashley, 6-6, Fr. (4.1 ppg., 4.5 rpg.)

TEAM STATS:

	FG %	FT %	REB AVG.	SCORE AVG.
MONTANA --	47.9	73.1	35.1	64.1
Opponent --	45.4	72.8	31.0	59.1
			+4.1	+5.0
MONTANA ST.	49.5	66.7	38.5	75.2
Opponent --	46.8	68.5	39.5	73.2
			-1.0	+2.0

BSC STANDINGS:

1.	Weber State	10	3
2.	Idaho State	8	4
3.	Northern Arizona	7	6
4.	Gonzaga	6	6
5.	Montana	6	7
	Montana State	6	7
7.	Boise State*	4	8
8.	Idaho*	3	9

*Only teams mathematically out of playoffs

Friday's Games

Boise State at Idaho

Idaho State at Gonzaga

BSC STANDINGS:
(continued)

Saturday's Games
Boise State at Gonzaga
Idaho State at Idaho
MSU at Montana
Weber State at NAU

WHAT IF:

Weber State and ISU have locked playoff spots. If Gonzaga wins both of its games this weekend they are in; but they lose one, it would be the winner of the UM-MSU game.

IF Weber beats NAU then once again it would be the winner of the UM-MSU contest; since both the Grizzlies and the Bobcats have beat the Wildcats once this year. IF Gonzaga lost both its games, then NAU, and the winner of the Grizzly-Bobcat game would get the playoff berth.

The BSC Championships are Friday and Saturday, March 2-3, in Ogden, Utah. Friday's games are at 7 p.m. and 9 p.m.; while Saturday's finale is at 8 p.m.

MONTGOMERY QUOTES:

I thought we played extremely well last weekend, and I was proud of the way the kids played. They kept their poise and battled all the way. I couldn't have asked them to do any more.

Now we're faced with a must win, and we also have to hope a couple of teams get knocked off so we can get in the playoffs. We still have a chance to make it; we just have to wait and see what happens.

We would have to win the game this Saturday, regardless. It's important as far as the playoffs are concerned, but it's also important because it's the Bobcats.

We have to play well against them. They've played some teams really close this year, and we definitely can't afford to let up at this point, and I think we proved last week we're not the type of team to give up at any point.

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